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Security Council

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Letter dated 24 February 2009 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of France in January 2009 (see annex). The document was prepared under my responsibility, after consultation with the other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jean-Maurice **Ripert**

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Annex to the letter dated 24 February 2009 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

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Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of France (January 2009)

Under the presidency of Ambassador Jean-Maurice Ripert, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, the Security Council engaged in an extensive programme of work.

During January 2009, the Security Council held 12 closed consultations of the whole, and 18 formal meetings, including 2 private meetings and 16 public meetings. The Council adopted six resolutions and produced one presidential statement.

Africa

Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

On 14 January, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1861 (2009), by which it authorized the deployment of a military component of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) to follow up the European operation in those countries at the end of its mandate on 15 March 2009. The Council also decided to extend the multidimensional presence in eastern Chad and the military presence in the north-eastern Central African Republic, which includes MINURCAT, for 12 months, until 15 March 2010. In addition, the Council called for an expeditious completion of the selection, deployment and training of the Chadian police and gendarmerie officers of the Détachement intégré de sécurité, set out benchmarks for the exit strategy of MINURCAT, and requested the Secretary-General to develop indicative timelines with a view to meeting them by 15 March 2011.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 21 January, the Council held a private meeting with troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), during which it heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Choi Young-Jin. The briefing was followed by an exchange of views.

On the same day, at a public meeting, the Council heard a briefing from the Special Representative on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. He presented the report of the Secretary-General dated 8 January 2009 (S/2009/21) and the recommendations therein. The briefing was followed by consultations of the whole on the issue.

On 27 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1865 (2009), by which it renewed the mandates of UNOCI and of the French forces which support it for six months, reduced the authorized level of troops of UNOCI as recommended by the Secretary-General, welcomed the progress of the operations of identification and registration of voters, and urged the Ivorian political actors to find an agreement without delay on a credible, new and realistic electoral time frame. The Council also

expressed its intention to examine as soon as possible this time frame, which will bind the Ivorian political actors and reflect their level of political commitment towards free, open, fair and transparent elections.

Sudan

On 28 January, in consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, on the recent upsurge of violence in Darfur. Council members called on all parties to cease hostilities, respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and cooperate with efforts led by the Joint African Union/United Nations Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassolé, to bring about a political solution to the conflict. They expressed their full support for the Mediator and for the action of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur to protect civilians at risk. They noted that the situation in Darfur was particularly volatile and that the Council should continue to monitor it closely.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 15 January, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, former President Obasanjo, briefed the Council on the progress of the negotiations between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) through the Nairobi dialogue. The Council members reiterated their full support to the mediation led by former Presidents Obasanjo and Mkapa and exchanged views about the challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the security and humanitarian consequences of the operation against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Orientale Province, the split within CNDP and the joint Rwandan-Congolese operation against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR).

On 27 January, the Council held an informal meeting with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Francis Deng, who briefed the Council about the visit he had made in November 2008 to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Council members underlined the need to find ways to improve the protection of civilians in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 28 January, during consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing from the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the recent developments in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Council members expressed satisfaction at the increased level of cooperation between the Congolese and the Rwandan authorities and underlined the importance of the activities of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) continuing to be closely coordinated with those of the countries in the context of the operation against FDLR. They reiterated that the protection of civilians should be considered the highest priority.

Somalia

On 16 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1863 (2009), in which it expressed its intent to establish a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Somalia as a follow-on force to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), subject to a further decision by 1 June 2009. The Council requested the

Secretary-General, in order to inform the Security Council of his assessment in advance of the decision, to submit a report by 15 April 2009, including developments in the situation in Somalia, progress towards the full deployment of AMISOM with a view to transition to United Nations peacekeeping operation, and progress in the political process and security conditions on the ground. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to provide a United Nations logistical support package to AMISOM, and to establish a trust fund to provide financial support to AMISOM and to assist in the re-establishment, training and retention of all-inclusive Somali security forces.

Peace and security in Africa

On 14 January, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1862 (2009), by which it expressed its deep concern about the continuing tense border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea, urged them to resolve it peacefully, and made some specific demands on Eritrea, including that Eritrea withdraw its forces and all their equipment to the position of the status quo ante no later than five weeks after the adoption of the resolution. The Council requested the Secretary-General to provide it with a report on the evolution of the situation. It also decided to review the situation six weeks after the adoption of the resolution on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General.

The situation in the Great Lakes region (LRA-affected areas)

On 15 January, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, on the humanitarian consequences of the joint operation led by Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan against the Lord's Resistance Army. Council members commended the States in the region for their increased cooperation to address the threat posed by LRA. They insisted on the necessity of taking all necessary measures to protect civilians. Following the consultations, the Council issued a statement to the press, strongly condemning the recent LRA attacks.

United Nations Office for West Africa

On 21 January, the Council heard a briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Said Djinnit, who presented the report of the Secretary-General dated 15 January 2009 (S/2009/39). The briefing was followed by an exchange of views on the challenges facing the subregion, including the impact of drug trafficking and the challenges posed to governance, and on the role of the United Nations Office for West Africa in contributing to address these issues with the Economic Community of West African States and the other concerned United Nations operations, offices and agencies, such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Asia

Nepal

On 16 January, the Council received a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal and Head of the United Nations Mission in Nepal

(UNMIN), Ian Martin. The briefing was followed by consultations of the whole on the issue.

On 23 February, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1864 (2009), by which it renewed the mandate of UNMIN for six months.

Middle East

Gaza

On 3 January, the Council held consultations of the whole on the situation in Gaza.

On 6 and 7 January, the Council held a public debate at the ministerial level on the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". During the debate, the Secretary-General, the President of the Palestinian National Authority, the representative of Israel, and representatives of other States Members of the United Nations (including Ministers for Foreign Affairs, in particular of the Arab League States) made statements.

On 8 January, after thorough consultations, including at the ministerial level, the Council held a meeting presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Bernard Kouchner, at which it adopted resolution 1860 (2009) by 14 votes in favour, with 1 abstention. In the resolution the Council called for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

On 13 January, during consultations of the whole, the Council was briefed by the Secretary-General before his visit to the Middle East. In their statements, Council members welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General.

On 15 January, in consultations of the whole, the Council was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerios, on the situation in Gaza, following the attacks on the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). During the consultations, there was an agreement on elements for remarks to be made by the President to the press. The President of the Council expressed grave concern, in particular following the military operations against hospitals, a building hosting journalists and the headquarters of UNRWA.

On 21 January, the Council held a public meeting to receive a briefing by the Secretary-General following his visit to the Middle East. During the consultations of the whole that followed, members of the Council agreed to issue a statement to the press, in which they welcomed the ceasefire in Gaza, expressed their strong appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General and reiterated their grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

On 27 January, the Council held a meeting at which it heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Karen AbuZayd, on the situation in Gaza. It was the first time that a Commissioner-General of UNRWA was invited to address the Council. Both the Under-Secretary-General and the Commissioner-General expressed great concern about the humanitarian situation in

Gaza and stressed the importance of free access for humanitarian aid. The meeting was followed by consultations of the whole.

Other matters

Bureaux of subsidiary bodies and members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission

On 6 January, in consultations of the whole, the Council elected new bureaux for its subsidiary bodies for 2009. A note by the President of the Council describing the composition was circulated later (S/2009/2). On the same day, the Council elected Burkina Faso and Mexico as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for a one-year term starting on 1 January 2009, in addition to the five permanent members of the Council.

Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

On 8 January, the Council was briefed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, on the situation of refugees and internally displaced people.

The High Commissioner commented on recent trends in forced displacement. He said that forced displacement was often the result of threats to international peace and security. He presented three challenges for the international community, namely, the role of peacekeeping in the protection of civilians, the concurrent needs to ensure staff security and to deliver humanitarian protection and assistance, and the difficulty of preserving humanitarian space in the context of an integrated United Nations presence.

Council members welcomed the briefing by the High Commissioner and expressed the wish to increase the frequency of such briefings.

Protection of civilians

On 14 January, the Council held an open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The debate started with a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

After the debate, the President read out a presidential statement (S/PRST/2009/1), by which the Council adopted a revised version of the aide memoire on protection of civilians prepared by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Informal seminar and thematic debate on peacekeeping operations

On 22 January, at the French Mission, Council members held an informal seminar on peacekeeping operations, chaired jointly by France and the United Kingdom. The former Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno; the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Alain Le Roy; the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Susanna Malcorra; the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, Ellen Margrethe Løj; and the Special Representative of

the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, Hédi Annabi, were present, as were the academics Colin Keating and Bruce Jones.

The discussion, for which a joint Franco-British non-paper had provided background, focused on the current challenges to peacekeeping operations, and on a proposal for a method to address them in the Council. Three broad series of issues were identified: effective strategic oversight, resource constraints, and lessons learned from implementation. France and the United Kingdom proposed to address them as a priority in the coming months, in close contact with the Secretariat and the main stakeholders, and to take stock of progress by August 2009.

On 23 January, a debate of the Council was organized on the same issue. In addition to Council members, speakers included the Under-Secretaries-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support, the Special Representative for Haiti, representatives of major troop contributors across geographic regions (Pakistan, India, Jordan, Uruguay), and representatives of regional organizations (European Union and African Union) and of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The participants welcomed the Franco-British initiative to address the challenges of peacekeeping. In addition to issues already raised on 22 January, they stressed, in particular, the need to reinforce dialogue among the main actors, particularly with troop-contributing countries, at all stages of the preparation, conduct and evaluation of operations.

Informal meeting with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide

On 27 January, an informal meeting with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Francis Deng, allowed the latter to present his action on the matter and brief the Council after his visit to the Great Lakes region.

Private debate on the maintenance of international peace and security: respect for international humanitarian law

On 29 January, the Council discussed the issue of respect for international humanitarian law during a private debate.

At the invitation of the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, Patricia O'Brien; the Head of the New York Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Dominique Buff; the Director of the New York Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Pierre Bertrand; the Director of the New York Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jessica Neuwirth; and the Chief of the Policy Development and Studies Branch of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, briefed the Council on the subject.

A discussion followed among Member States during which they noted the alarming trend of increase in the number of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, expressed the necessity for all parties to conflict to respect international humanitarian law and decided to remain seized of the matter.